Smart Future Planning Grants Program Guidelines Fiscal Year 2006

Deadline Extended To October 15!

Office of Smart Growth

$2.295 MILLION AVAILABLE

The Smart Future Planning Grant program has had three years of planning success throughout New Jersey. This one of a kind program will provide $2,295,000 in FY2006 to municipalities, counties and non-profit agencies to help plan for the future — one that balances development and redevelopment with the preservation of open space and environmental resources.

For FY2006 our program focuses on seven key categories: design guidelines for creating places; downtown and Main Street revitalization; green building; parking; transfer of development rights; charrettes; and greyfield redevelopment. And since public support facilitates plan implementation, we encourage community involvement.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Department of Community Affairs' Office of Smart Growth will accept applications for two deadlines: October 15, 2005 and February 15, 2006. The standard application form can be found on our website at http://www.state.nj.us/dca/osg/resources/grants. <u>Applications must be completed and submitted electronically</u>.

GRANT CRITERIA

The Smart Future Grants will concentrate on the seven key areas listed in this brochure. Grant proposals should outline work scopes in one or more of these key areas.

The Office of Smart Growth will give additional weight to projects proposed in municipalities with center designations or endorsed master plans. Smart Future Grants are for planning purposes only, and cannot be used for capital improvements or general administration.

Richard J. Codey
Acting Governor
State of New Jersey

Design Guidelines for Creating Places

This new program dedicates funds for municipalities to produce design guidelines that will enhance their redevelopment, rehabilitation or historic areas. An appropriate design framework can set the stage for a broad range of other strategies such as economic development, pedestrian access, and marketability. The goal is to create places that are destinations for people to live, work and play, rather than to speed through on their way to some place else.

Too often well-intentioned design guidelines remain separated from reality. Creating Places projects should yield stand-alone products that will also provide input for other planning documents such as a master plan or redevelopment plan. Design guidelines should also affect any relevant ordinances on design, zoning, or historic districts.

Creating Places projects may include the following in producing design guidelines:
- *Public workshops*
- *Physical surveys (streetscape, landscape, sites)*
- *People surveys (businesses, residents, visitors)*

ReSTORE New Jersey

A downtown or traditional commercial district is one of the most visible indicators of community pride and economic and social health. ReSTORE New Jersey assists municipalities in revitalizing neighborhood businesses and commercial districts, which help attract and retain residents, businesses, industries, retirees and tourists. By encouraging forward-thinking economic development, the program helps ensure that the community's assets and legacy can be passed on to future generations.

ReSTORE project examples include:
- *Downtown or Main Street revitalization plan*
- *Special Improvement District plan*
- *Redevelopment, rehabilitation or historic preservation plan/analysis*
- *Economic or community development strategy*
- *Mixed-use plans (e.g. living-over-the-shops, adding residents to a commercial district)*

Go Green!

Go Green! encourages introducing green building concepts into the framework of local governments and is designed to help municipalities achieve energy savings, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and replace conventional energy sources with renewable or alternative sources. Green building techniques also set an example to the community by incorporating them in the construction and operation of public buildings and services.

Go Green! project examples include:
- *Cost-benefit analysis of investing in green building technology*
- *Green guidelines/standards for public facilities and operations*
- *Plans for new or upgraded facilities using green building techniques*

Park & Go

Parking supply presents a tremendous challenge to many redevelopment efforts; a sea of surface parking is not always the best or most efficient use of land within a developed area. But the costs of structured parking can be prohibitive to developers looking to meet the needs of their future tenants. Park & Go encourages innovative ways of dealing with parking problems by using strategic methods for managing various parking alternatives according to location, price and time of day. The funds can also be used to look into creative financing options, and to think about how to design parking structures that fit into the local context.

Park & Go project examples include:
- *Parking strategy (locations, pricing)*
- *Multi-modal strategy focused on parking for transit and pedestrian access*
- *Context-sensitive parking design (e.g. shared lots behind buildings, ground-floor retail in parking decks)*
- *Parking needs assessment — supply and demand*

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

TDR allows a municipality to transfer the development potential of historic sites, farmland or environmentally sensitive areas into a receiving area that can accommodate the growth. Developers purchase development rights from property owners in the sending area in order to be able to build in the receiving area.

TDR captures the best of both worlds — enhancing the viability of development in urban and suburban areas while protecting undeveloped land from sprawl, enabling greater control over where growth occurs. Other beneficiaries include landowners, who are compensated fairly for their land, and developers, who have a clearer picture of where they can build. In FY2005 a portion of Smart Future Grant money was dedicated to nine TDR Demonstration Projects. The best practices learned from these projects will provide guidance for future TDR grants.

TDR grant funds may be used to fulfill the TDR program requirements:
- *Development transfer plan element*
- *Capital improvement program*
- *Real estate market analysis*
- *Utility service plan*
- *Development transfer ordinance*
- *Initial plan endorsement*

Charrettes

A charrette is an intense, collaborative meeting or series of meetings that involves a diverse mix of professional experts and stakeholders in order to address an array of issues. Public participation is a key element in running a successful charrette and in generating momentum to apply the ideas from the event. Although charrettes are traditionally focused on design, OSG's charrette grants can also include land use, transportation, environment and recreation. It is expected that relevant staff from OSG and other state agencies will participate in the charrette.

Charrette expenditures may include:
- *Professional services*
- *Public workshops*
- *Pre- and/or post-charrette research, analysis reports*
- *Facilities and supplies (not to exceed 10% of the grant total)*

Greyfield Redevelopment

The Office of Smart Growth has advanced a major initiative to encourage the redevelopment of areas that are already built up but in various phases of physical decline and/or economic underutilization, and focuses on areas that are not contaminated. Greyfields include under-performing shopping centers, strip malls and office parks. There are various greyfield indicators, including physical appearance of the land and buildings, retail sales per square foot, and occupancy rates.

Greyfield locations in urban areas, inner-ring suburbs and on highway corridors have significant mixed-use redevelopment potential since they are often close to existing infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, public transit, schools, and other community facilities. Redevelopment of existing built-up areas can help to save open space, reverse any deterioration in the immediate areas, increase the tax base, and stabilize the community at large.

Greyfields project examples include:
- *concept plan*
- *community visioning*
- *mixed-use zoning analysis*
- *analysis to determine need of redevelopment*
- *redevelopment plan*

SECONDARY CRITERIA

We also consider the following criteria:

- OSG encourages projects to provide opportunities for community participation and visioning.
- OSG encourages applicants to use Smart Future Grants to help leverage other sources of funding, such as federal and state agencies as well as the non-profit and private sectors (e.g. community development banks).
- OSG will consider an applicant's successful implementation of any previous Smart Growth grants, if relevant.

GRANT EXECUTION AND MONITORING

Once awarded a grant, an applicant will need to complete a grant agreement with OSG to finalize the scope, deadlines and payment schedule. Following this agreement, OSG will provide the applicant a format and schedule for the submission of quarterly reports. Failure to submit quarterly reports and/or other documents as required by the agreement in a timely manner may result in a suspension of the grant.

IMPLEMENTATION

The plans that are generated as a result of a Smart Future Grant are meant to be implemented, and not to fall prey to obstacles that can delay your ability to make them a reality.

Therefore, OSG now requires that the final product include a "forward strategy" outlining the steps necessary to implement the plan. Some of the best planning reports already incorporate a section detailing how to move things forward. Considering the variety of planning projects supported by Smart Future Grants, OSG does not expect a single format for this section. Nevertheless, the forward strategy should describe:

- Economic and/or fiscal feasibility of implementing plan recommendations
- What actions will be taken by the applicant to implement this plan
- How implementation will be coordinated with neighboring counties or municipalities, if relevant
- Financial, technical and regulatory assistance needed from state agencies
- How the implementation will be funded
- An approximate timetable for implementation

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Application Deadlines
October 15, 2005
February 15, 2006